

Council Member Mike Sullivan's Newsletter

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Council Member Mike Sullivan



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Residents of District E,

There is normally a slowdown at city hall around the Christmas holidays. Employees take their vacations and there is generally less activity down here. I have used that slow time to get out into the field and "touch and feel" what is going on in my council district. This included visits to our fire stations in Kingwood and Clear Lake, a ride-along with HPD Sgt John Bertolini in Clear Lake, a tour of new public safety radio sites, and visits of the various construction sites throughout the district. You will find summaries of all in this newsletter.

As we gear back up for a new year at city council, please know that I am absolutely focused on the city's budget shortfall. The numbers are somewhere between \$30 and \$50 million short this year, to as much as \$500 million over the next three years. This deficit grows in future years. That is why it is more important than ever that we slow the pace of spending at city hall. We cannot spend more than we take in. Doing so puts us in terrible financial shape, not only for now, but for years to come. Borrowing has to slow, spending has to slow, and budgets have to be reduced. To ignore these basic financial principles is dangerous. No administration is responsible for the spending, but they are all guilty of it, including our current administration. I offered up \$40+ million in cuts and they were all soundly rejected by the mayor and city council.

We cannot continue to assess new fees and charges on our taxpayers and businesses. That is why I voted against all 150+ permit fee increases this month. Examples of fee increases are; *Burglar Alarm \$30 to \$35 (2nd increase in two years; Burglar Alarm with panic alarm feature is still \$50), Fire Alarm \$25 - \$50, Rabies Control License \$10 - \$20, Swimming Pool Inspection Fee \$85 - \$135, and Parking Meter Hourly Rates \$1.50 to \$1.80.* It is just absolutely ridiculous to increase fees simply because you have the power to do so. I haven't supported that in the past, and I will not support it in the future. Oh, one more thing.....the fee increases go into effect *immediately*.

Lastly, I would like to welcome State Representative – Elect District 127 Dan Huberty who will be sworn in to the 82nd Texas State Legislature on January 11, 2011. He is dedicated to the community and I look forward to working with him.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you.

Mike Sullivan
Council Member

New North Sector Manager

After graduating from Bishop Lynch College Preparatory School, in Dallas, TX, native Houstonian Kelly Waterman came back to Houston to attend the University of Houston as a third generation Cougar. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science with a focus on policy and international business.

Waterman served as an intern in the Hobby Center for Public Policy and the Regional Houston Office of U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. In his year and a half with the Senator, Waterman coordinated regional young professional and college outreach and he assisted in addressing constituent issues.

Waterman looks forward to bringing his professional experiences to his new position as North Sector Manager to assist the constituents in District E.



Kelly Waterman, North Sector Manager

Houston Arts Alliance Meeting

Council Member Sullivan and the Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) are hosting a meeting in Kingwood on January 13th at Creekwood Middle School. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. and run until 7:30 p.m. Representatives from HAA will present information about grants available to organizations that promote arts based programs, events and education. They will also cover the Panel Review Process, which every applicant must go through.

Council Member Sullivan has been active in trying to return these monies to District E and encourages those interested to attend this informative meeting.

For more information, please contact Council Member Sullivan's office at (832) 393.3008.

AmeriCorps Recognized at City Hall



Council Member Sullivan pictured in the City Hall rotunda with the AmeriCorps students.

Several students who participated in the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps attended a city council meeting last month and were recognized for their voluntary service in District E. The students, who contributed their time, effort and strength to the renovation of the Lake Houston Wilderness Park, were presented with certificates from Council Member Sullivan for their outstanding work and service to the community.

Lake Houston Wilderness Park is a nearly 5,000 acre park located just 30 minutes north of downtown at 22031 Baptist Encampment Road.

Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce Meeting

Council Member Sullivan attended the December Governmental Affairs meeting with the Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce. Senator Tommy Williams was the featured guest speaker and spoke about upcoming legislative priorities as he and his colleagues prepare for the upcoming legislative session this year.

Council Member Sullivan has a positive working and professional relationship with the Senator's office and looks forward to working with him this session for the betterment of the community they both serve.

North Park Widening Update

Construction on the widening of North Park Drive has begun. Most recently, the trees have been cleared to allow for the construction of a new twenty-four foot wide concrete roadway with curbs and gutters, new storm drain pipes with extra capacity, meandering sidewalks that will connect with existing greenbelts, pedestrian tunnels, relocation of village monuments, wide-landscaped medians, and a fully signalized intersection with pedestrian signals and ADA compliant ramps at Rock Springs. Construction is scheduled to be complete in April 2011.



The North Park widening project is a CIP project worth \$1,425,616.00.40.

Project Updates

- The design of the new community center is complete. The bid date is scheduled for January 13 with construction anticipated to begin in March.
- The widening of North Park Drive is under construction. Substantial completion is set for late April 2011.
- Intersection improvements at Woodland Hills and North Park Drive are complete. Improvements at West Lake Houston Parkway and Kingwood Drive began in June and are now complete as well.

Houston Arts Alliance Meeting

Council Member Sullivan and the Houston Arts Alliance are hosting a meeting in the south part of his district on Wednesday, January 19 at San Jacinto College – South Campus in the Marie Flickinger Building, Room 12116. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. and run until 7:30 p.m. Representatives from HAA will present information about available grants they offer to organizations that promote arts based programs, events and education. They will also cover the Panel Review Process, which every applicant must go through.

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Sabo Road Construction

Council Member Sullivan is proud to announce the approval of the construction contract for the Sabo Road Reconstruction project. City Council voted unanimously last month to accept and award the bid to SER Construction Partners, LTD. The project is scheduled to begin in early February 2011.

The road is highly traveled and at times highly congested. Council Member Sullivan believes it will bring great relief to South Belt residents, faculty and parents of the surrounding schools as well as the commuters who use the road as access to the freeway.

This project consists of the reconstruction of Sabo Road from Kingspoint Road to Fuqua and Kingspoint Road from Sabo Road to Kleckly Drive. The new roadways will consist of a four-lane divided concrete boulevard section with curb and gutter, sidewalks and other underground utilities.

Beamer and Beltway 8 Intersection Concern

Council Member Sullivan's office was recently contacted by the South Belt Leader regarding northbound traffic at the intersection of Beamer Rd. and Beltway 8. Drivers would repeatedly experience congestion at the intersection due to the limitations of the solo left turn lane. The city's Public Works Department investigated the concern and found there to be high traffic counts warranting new lane markings allowing for two left turn lanes from Beamer Rd. onto Beltway 8.

Council Member Sullivan thanks the Leader for bringing this situation to his attention, working with his office and being patient while Public Works investigated.

Project Updates

- Installation of ball field lights at Blackhawk Park was recently approved by city council. Installation is set to begin January 2011.
- Sabo Road construction is scheduled to begin February 2011.
- Sagemont Community Center design work is complete. Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2011.
- City council approved a \$70,000.00 contract for a comprehensive flood study at and around Ellington Airport.
- Outdoor lighting for Law Park has been installed.

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HGAC Pedestrian-Bicyclist Study

Council Member Sullivan is pleased to announce that city council voted in favor, December 22nd, of the Houston Galveston Area Council's Pedestrian-Bicyclist Special District Study for the Clear Lake area. The focus of the proposed study is the improvement of pedestrian and bicyclist mobility within the Clear Lake area of Houston, including roadways that are adjacent to the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (Space Center Campus is excluded from the study). The area that will be studied is El Dorado Boulevard along the northern limit; W. Bay Area Boulevard, El Camino Drive and Nasa Road One in the south; and Space Center Boulevard in the northeast. The study area also includes a portion of Nassau Bay which will be a partner throughout the project.

The study will take approximately eight months to complete, starting in January 2011. For more information, please contact Council Member Sullivan's office at (832) 393.3008.

Political Protocol Committee Meeting

On December 8, Council Member Sullivan attended the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's Political Protocol Committee meeting at the Lakewood Yacht Club. The committee is currently organizing their annual legislative trip to Austin with the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, which will take place February 16. The committee agreed to present several key issues to legislatures including education, Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base priorities and a maritime industry tax cap on recreational boating. Council Member Sullivan participated in the conversations surrounding the prioritization of issues and looks forward to keeping up with them during this year's legislative session.



*PPC Chair Marcy Fryday and
Council Member Sullivan*

HPD Ride Along

Over the Christmas holiday, Council Member Sullivan rode along with Houston Police Department Sgt. John Bertolini from the Clear Lake Substation to witness a typical night an HPD officer experiences and to understand the way they respond to calls. During the ride, they checked many areas of the southern portion of District E from parks to game rooms, apartments to businesses. Several of the areas that were observed were places that the District E office had received concerns and complaints about. Council Member Sullivan values his constituent's feedback and thanks them for bringing their particular concerns to his attention.

Council Member Sullivan places a high priority on the ride-alongs that he participates in and tries to schedule them often. He thanks Clear Lake Substation Captain Octavio Pando for arranging his request and Sgt. John Bertolini for his time.

Project Udates

- Sylvan Rodriguez Park is currently in the programming phase. Construction is scheduled to begin fiscal year 2012.
- Ellington Airport has almost \$50 million dollars in military construction project now underway.

CIP Meetings

Council Member Sullivan and the Mayor's Office will be hosting a series of Capital Improvement Project meetings the first quarter of 2011 in District E. Although his office is still in the process of scheduling the meetings for Kingwood, South Belt and Clear Lake, please make note they will occur sometime this February and March. Once scheduled, we will notify residents via email blasts, newsletter and local papers.

CIP meetings are held every year to inform citizens of upcoming projects that are scheduled in their respective communities. The meetings also afford citizens an opportunity to voice their concerns and address their respective city officials. Citizens can fill out a CIP request form at any time by visiting www.houstontx.gov by clicking on the 3-1-1 icon or by calling 3-1-1 directly. For more information and specific details of the CIP projects in your area, please visit www.houstontx.gov/cip/index.html.

Surveys

We want your feedback on hot issues! Please visit Council Member Sullivan's website to answer frequently published surveys that will be posted at the beginning of every month. This month, Council Member Sullivan wants your opinion on Proposition 1 (Rain Tax) and the increase in permit fees that city council voted on last month. To see January's, please visit www.houstontx.gov/council/e and return every month to participate in answering new questions!

City of Houston Mandatory Furloughs

Last month, Mayor Parker announced that all civilian city employees, with the exception of "mission critical" positions such as emergency responders, Solid Waste personnel, etc, are mandated to take six involuntary furlough days from January 2011 to June 2011. Council Member Sullivan has been vocal about cutting more from the city's budget, and interviewed with several news stations following the mayor's announcement. He stressed that mandatory furloughs are only a temporary measure to help with the city's grave budget deficit. He emphasized that he recommended several budget reduction amendments, deferring pay increases for employees and freezing spending at 2009 levels during last year's budget discussions, all of which were voted down. Council Member Sullivan will continue to encourage conservative fiscal responsibility and encourages the administration to present and implement significant cost saving measures.



Council Member Sullivan and Gabe Gutierrez from KHOU speak following the mayor's press conference about furloughs.

FIFA World Cup Announcement Ceremony



Houston Dynamo CEO Chris Canetti and Council Member Sullivan

Council Member Sullivan joined soccer fans, elected officials and Houston Dynamo representatives at the FIFA World Cup announcement viewing party at the George R. Brown Convention Center on December 2. The United States bid to play host to the 2022 games with the City of Houston in the running as a potential key host city. Millions of Americans voiced their support with hopes of seeing their favorite teams play in their home country. The final presentation and announcement granted the 2018 FIFA World Cup to Russia and the 2022 games to Qatar.

Dynamo Stadium Press Conference

The Harris County Sports Authority's chairman Kenny Friedman and the Houston Dynamo's CEO Chris Canetti hosted a press conference last month to celebrate the lease agreement that was reached on the future site of the Dynamo stadium. The stadium, which will be located on the east side of downtown, will be home to Houston's MLS soccer team, the host of Texas Southern University football, entertainment events and other sporting events. Council Member Sullivan has been a vocal supporter of the stadium and attended the press conference and a meeting earlier in the day about said agreement. He is also pleased to announce that city council voted in favor of the lease agreement. All parties involved expect the groundbreaking to be scheduled in January 2011 with expectations of it being open to the public in April 2012.

Council Member Sullivan is working to ensure that district E youth soccer teams have opportunities to partner with the Dynamo in some former or fashion.



Council Member Sullivan with members of the Harris County Sports Authority Board and Houston Dynamo CEO Chris Canetti

International Trade and Development Meeting



The Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council/Europe met Friday, December 10 in Council Chambers. The council laid out their formal mission during the meeting, which is to establish concrete objectives that embrace matters of international affairs, economic and community development. The MITDC – Europe also agree to assist in the creation of strategies and in the implementation of projects that will enhance Houston's presence on the global stage. In addition, Council Member Sullivan was introduced as the MITDC-Europe Ex-Officio member, and Kritof Abbeloos, President of the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce, was introduced to the council as a new member.

Mayor's Reception for the Hispanic Advisory Board

Council Member Sullivan joined his colleagues and others at Mayor Parker's home on December 13 for a reception for the city's 2010 Hispanic Advisory Board. The board is composed of involved residents of the City of Houston who volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of the community. These residents were introduced to the Mayor's senior staff and council members during the reception.

Reception for Mayor Parker's New Council Liaison

Council Member Sullivan attended a special reception for Mayor Parker's new council liaison, William Paul Thomas last month. The reception, which was held for council members and senior staff members, was organized to introduce Thomas and to allow the Mayor to announce his new duties as an employee of her office. Thomas, former chief of staff for Council Member Sue Lovell, will have new responsibilities to help improve communication with all of the members of city council. Council Member Sullivan looks forward to working with Thomas and supports the efforts by the mayor's office to improve relations between her office and the council floor.



Council Member Sullivan and Phao Tam

Christmas Events

Last month, Council Member Sullivan was invited to and attended several Christmas parties throughout the city and his district. Council Member Sullivan extends his sincerest thanks for being able to celebrate the Christmas holidays with the following people and organizations: Central Houston, State Representative Allen Fletcher, HPD Air Support, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, Houston Fire Fighters' Union, Houston Public Library Tea and the Houston Police Officers Union. He wishes everyone a Happy New Year and looks forward to continuing to serve the city and his district in 2011.

HPD's Blue Santa Visits Clayton Homes



Council Member Sullivan and HPD's Blue Santa, also known as Sgt. Dave Thomas

Children of the Clayton Homes community were surprised this year when Houston Police Chief Charles McLelland, Blue Santa, members of the Houston Police Foundation, Houston Children's Charity, Halliburton, Linn Energy and former NFL football players hosted a holiday party for them. The children ate cookies, drank punch and visited Santa while having the opportunity to choose a gift from "Santa's Toy Shop." Council Member Sullivan was the only council member who joined the Houston Police Department and its partners to witness dozens of kids have a great Christmas.

16th Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

The Parents of Murdered Children and Surviving Family Members of Homicide hosted their 16th Annual Crime Victims Memorial Remembrance Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 11 in the lobby of the City Hall Annex Building. Council Member Sullivan joined the parents and several members of the Houston Police Department's Victim Services Unit at the ceremony and helped celebrate the lighting of the tree and the placement of personalized ornaments in memory of crime victims.

Council Member Sullivan has attended the ceremony for the last few years and has actively participated in other activities and events with the families that have lost loved ones due to homicide. He commends the Parents of Murdered Children and crime victims' advocate Andy Kahan, for their continued support for the families.



Celine Wallace and Council Member Sullivan at the ceremony

Christmas Tree Recycling

The City of Houston kicked off its 20th Annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program on December 30th. Every year many Houstonians discard thousands of used Christmas trees that could be recycled into useable products. The city is encouraging residents to recycle their Christmas trees, give them a new lease on life and continue to make the recycling of Christmas trees a family tradition. The recycling program will run through January 11, 2011. Recycled trees must have tinsel, ornaments and stands removed. No flocked trees can be recycled.

For more information please visit www.houstonsolidwaste.org.

Heavy Trash

Council Member Sullivan would like to remind District E residents that the City of Houston's Solid Waste Management Department will only pick up Tree Waste in January. Tree Waste is defined as "clean" wood waste such as tree limbs, branches and stumps. Lumber, furniture and treated wood will NOT be accepted.

For more information, please visit the Solid Waste Management Department's website at www.houstonsolidwaste.org.

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